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DURING the last eleven years, the period of time covered by the existence of the DECORATOR AND FURNISHER, more attention has been given to house decoration in this country, than during any similar period in its past history. This attention comes not from architects alone, but also from the occupants of the houses, an attention that was practically unknown in all the prior history of the United States.

IT is gratifying to the publishers of the DECORATOR AND FURNISHER to know that a large proportion of this interest in beautifying of the home is due to the existence of our journal, and it is a further matter of congratulation to know that we have persistently fought against many abominations in house furnishing that have been foisted from time to time upon the public, our articles and illustrations being at all times in the interest of true art.

AMONG the various absurdities that we have been at war with, since the establishment of our journal, and that have been annihilated are: 1. The huge drawing-room mirror, rounded at the top, with hydrocephalic, real, or applied, carvings.

2. The white marble chimney piece, often reinforced with carved trusses to support the shelf, and always with a semi-circular arch, to enclose the ugly steel grate, or heater.

3. The cut glass chandelier, with its perpetually dropping pendants, and its general impression of artificial gloom.

4. The Brummagem "gaselier," massive or ghastly, with most abominably bad form.

5. The plaster ceiling rosette, usually out of scale with the ceiling which is spoiled.

In addition to these furnishing eccentricities, there still remains with us the ordinary builder's plaster cornice of outrageous dimensions with its costly frippery, a feature which does more to vulgarize our rooms than anything else, but is destined to speedy disuse.

INTERIOR decoration, which at the present time has certainly supped its fill of French 18th century effects, is about to make a departure in two different directions. The first direction is in favor of furniture that is good in design, good in

material, and good in workmanship, that will be neither French, nor Colonial in style, but a Renaissance of simple, artistic, but not over-ornamented furniture, wherein good taste is not sacrificed to quantity. While simple things are not cheap, it pays to buy them in the long run, for one never tires of simplicity. It is the ornamented furniture that people sell at a sacrifice, when they learn more.

WHAT is wanted is that the design of the chimney piece, of the wall-paper, of the cabinet, should be good, however old and however frequently used, and good, under these circumstances, means that they shall have been designed by men of taste and experience, whether they have, or have not, a traditional basis. It is the apartment that is filled with showy, expensive things that is commonplace. Designers of new education, who are ignorant of and indifferent to the best in art, draw novelties out of their heads. The dealer buys them because they are novelties, and then pushes them on his customers because he has them in stock. Hence the commonplace and inartistic condition of our homes.

THE modern average parlor is a storehouse of fragile furniture, of treacherous tables, smothered in draperies, for lamps of uncertain equilibrium, with silk or paper petticoats. It is a frightful place, wherein the children are not allowed to enter. The housemaid enters it once a week to dust the furniture, and draw the window curtains still closer, to prevent a ray of sunshine piercing the gloom, and the door is then locked to keep out the children. No room in the house ought to be too good for one's children, and this ought to be the test of the highest style of decoration.

IN our next issue we hope to show samples of furniture of artistic simplicity that have been actually constructed to the order of customers. These are illustrations of an increasing taste for the quieter types of Chippendale, Sheraton and Heppelwhite furniture, because the work of Chippendale and Sheraton and their imitators, is peculiarly adapted for the daily use of the average family. We do not mean to say that any of the designs are to be found in Chippendale's books, because most of the extravagant and over-ornamented designs found there are not at all what he made, but only what he wanted to make.

THE other direction in which interior furnishing is extending, to avoid the commonplace, is the arrangement of modern furnishings after the manner of the orthodox Moorish, Hindoo and Japanese styles. Many people have decorated their interiors strictly after the styles mentioned, but such attempts are simply counterfeits of foreign belongings, produced by the mistaken notion that improvements of this kind must of necessity be queer, or foreign. We hope to show in forthcoming issues of our journal that much improvement is practicable with our everyday belongings arranged after the Oriental spirit, without danger of our rooms being *outré*, or un-American in character.

A ROOM with pictures in it and a room without differ by nearly as much as a room without windows, for pictures are a loophole of escape to the soul, leading it to other scenes and other spheres, as it were, through the frame of an exquisite picture where the fancy may for a moment revel refreshed and delighted. They are relief to the jaded mind; they are windows to the imprisoned thought; they are books; they are histories and sermons which we can read without the trouble of turning over the leaves.

THE Arts and Crafts aims at the development of brotherhood. They believe that the system under which we live, by compelling man to give as little and get as much as possible in all transactions, develops the lower and stunts the higher life. On all sides there is evidence that man is awakening to this great fact. He is beginning to feel that self must suffer if brotherhood be neglected. And among the members of the Arts and Crafts are a few of those who are now toiling in the noblest cause that ever inspired human endeavor—the triumph of Love over selfish Greed.

THE word "dedecoration" is a word used to express whatever is incongruous in form, color or arrangement, in the way of our interior belongings. An illustration of the word has been given in the supposition of the incongruity that would result from seeing a respectable citizen clad in a pea green coat, falling in the mud—a combination of colors not entirely satisfactory. However, even a fault of color decoration may be pardoned, but there are two other kinds of dedecoration beyond the pale of toleration, and whose existence stamps the owner or occupier of the house as a person of no taste, namely, the outrageous juxtaposition of inharmonious belongings and a vicious excess of individual furnishings.

The saying, "If the blind lead the blind, both will fall into the ditch," is very apropos of much of our modern decorative art. These dire results are usually committed by non-technical householders, overriding the tastes of the decorator; or they may be the creation of the non-technical decorators who do not know anything about the fundamental principles of the art they profess. The uneducated eye can only grasp effects, and knows nothing of the causes by which they are produced. The languid occupant of the stalls at the theater, when a spectacular piece is being played, gazes spellbound upon the skillful transformation scene, but has not the slightest conception of the deft touches of the artist's brush by which the effects are produced. So, too, the dilettante decorator knows precisely the results at which he wishes to arrive, but the knowledge of the exact steps to be taken to gain that effect belongs to the expert. Failing in his collaboration, his aims at creation only compass chaos.

Some of the so-called artistic dens that have been created of late, either by the domestic decorator himself, or at the instigation of some inexpert professional, are nothing more or less than chambers of horrors, and an outrage upon the real object of decorative art.

FASHION has given its sanction to the use of the single bed, and large numbers of the so-called "twin bedsteads" are now in the market, many of them made of costly woods rich with carving. They are so designed that when placed side by side the effect is that of one wide bedstead, whereas a separate spring mattress and bed clothing are provided for each one.

It is well known that the double bed is unhygienic, and medical journals have been condemning it for some time past, one writer claiming that injury to one or the other of two people sleeping in this way is sure to result in time. Particularly is this true with regard to the young and the aged; but by the use of the twin bed they may occupy the same room and sleep side by side without harm to either.

There is no class, perhaps, who need the refreshment and rest which comes of occupying a bed alone so much as household servants, and they are the people of all others who are condemned to the very poorest sleeping accommodations.

In city houses this is notably the case, and in one home known to the writer the five servants are all obliged to sleep in one large room in the basement. In every other respect much kindness is shown them, but in order that the family may be lodged luxuriously they must suffer. By the use of single beds two members of a family who now occupy separate rooms might be made very comfortable in one, thus providing an extra room to be given up to the servants.

It is far wiser and fitter to show consideration in this way to those who serve us than to be constantly making presents of money and cast-off clothing—a practice which never fails to have a demoralizing effect.

Two iron bedsteads painted white (each three feet wide), placed side by side, look well if dressed with a spread of pretty light colored chintz and a round bolster covered to match. This is the neatest and most tasteful way of arranging a bed in the daytime, and seems to be coming into very general use. The old-time valance has also been revived, and this, if used, should be of the same chintz as the covering, or all in white if the bed is so draped. It is particularly suited to the iron bedstead just mentioned, and may easily be fastened about it, but it must be kept daintily fresh and free from dust, otherwise its revival would prove a disadvantage. Picturesqueness should always be a secondary feature in a bedroom.